

Subject: English III Honors (50 minutes)

Topic: *Julius Caesar*

Title of Lesson: The Theme of Power

Objectives:

1. Students will define and develop an understanding of what it is to be powerful and predict the role that power will play in *Julius Caesar* ([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2](#)) (E3-1.4)
2. Students will “tweet” to one another about Act I, Scene iii using the theme of power. ([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.E](#)) (E3-5.1)
3. Students will collaborate in group discussion to define power and the many different forms it takes on. ([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C](#))

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to continue to explore the play, this time looking closely at the theme of power. What is so interesting about this theme is the many ways it could be applied to the text. Students will recognize that themes are constantly evolving throughout a work of literature, and that this introduction of the theme is only the beginning. This lesson will leave students with the potential to develop their own takes on the theme of power in *Julius Caesar*.

Materials:

- Copies of *Julius Caesar* (25)
- Prezi Presentation (1)
- Reader Response Journals (25)
- Poster Board (5)

-Markers

Procedures:

Procedures for *Introducing* the Lesson:

Students will walk into the classroom and see that desks are already in groups of 5.

Students will retrieve their reader response journals and begin responding to the prompts that are on the board.

1. How would you define power?
2. What kind of power can someone possess?
3. What do you think has the power to control you?
4. What things have you felt powerless against?
5. What role do you think power will play in Julius Caesar?
6. If power is influence, what things (other than other humans) have power over the characters?

Students will be given about 7 minutes to discuss their answers as a group and record their responses. The reason I have chosen to have the students work on these prompts as a group is that their responses will be diverse and worth sharing with one another. This collaborative approach ensures that students are participating within smaller groups. Once the discussions are finished, we will come together as a class and discuss the prompts together. I am particularly interested in discussing numbers 1, 5, and 6. We have already read Act I, Scenes i and ii, so we have some idea of what is going on in the play at the moment and have been introduced to the key characters. In Act I, Scene iii, students will be looking for the power of superstition and omens along with the power of persuasion. (5 minutes)

Procedures for *Developing* the Lesson:

We will first read Act I, Scene iii aloud, and I will take volunteers to read. This reading should take (~20 minutes) and focuses on the power of superstition and Cassius' plot to take Rome from Caesar at all costs.

This will bring us into our next discussion. I would like to relate what we have read to things that we do on a daily basis that we do not even realize are considered good or bad omens. I would also like to take this opportunity to incorporate my ELL student's home culture by sharing some of the interesting superstitions that can be found in hispanic culture. Superstitions hold much more power over us than we like to think. We avoid walking under ladders, black cats crossing our paths, and we pick up pennies for good luck. Some Latino superstitions include:

- Dreaming about your teeth falling out means that there will be a death in the family
- Latino culture believes that staring at or touching newborn babies too much may curse them with the Mal de Ojo. The baby could become sick with a fever or worse. The only way to prevent this is by making the child wear an azabache bracelet or necklace
- If you are sweeping the floor, don't sweep over a single woman's feet or she will never get married!
- If your ear is ringing, it means that someone is talking about you! To keep from getting any negative

energy from that person, immediately bite on your tongue.

I will then ask the class if any of them have heard of these superstitions, or if they have any other examples that they would like to share. Personally, I can share the omens and superstitions that my Italian-American family believe in. (6 minutes) I will then ask the students to answer the following question with a partner:

Do you believe in bad omens? Or do you think that it is as Cicero says:

“Indeed it is a strange-disposed time;/

But men may construe things after their fashion,/
And fear themselves as others fear them.”

Clean from the purpose of the things themselves” (I.iii.33–35).

While Casca believes that there is power in omens, we must also touch on Cassius’ power. Where does it come from? Does it come from his conviction that what he is doing is righteous? Does it come from hatred? (10)

Procedures for **Concluding** the Lesson:

With 10 minutes left in the class, we will conclude our lesson with a fun activity. This activity will include Twitter will allow students to tweet what they have noticed in the reading and relate it to the theme of power (Milner, 260). Students can work in groups to create a message that is 140 characters or less of text, using hashtags and even changing out a ‘you’ for ‘u’ should they need the space. I will provide a sample for students on the board. Students will write these tweets on a piece of poster board using markers provided. Students will leave room on their poster board for replies from the class, and when they finish composing their tweets, they will pass it on to the next group, who will reply. We will display these tweets in the class room when we are finished. I will use these tweets as an exit slip for groups. Finally, students will be given their Literary Circle novel, which they had chosen in the previous class period. I gave novels out based on preference, and if there were not enough of the same novel, I gave preference to those who had all of their participation points for the year so far. When the students have their books, they may leave. (15 minutes)

Evaluating/Assessing the Learning:

During the lesson: During the lesson, I will be walking around the room, monitoring progress that students are making throughout their group discussions. Students who are actively participating and contributing within small groups will receive 1 point towards their participation.

After the lesson: Students will hand in their reader response journals and tweet activity to me.

Students who have written meaningful responses in their journals will be rewarded .5 of a participation point and will receive the other .5 of a point if they have completed the tweet activity with their group.

Tweeting Like A Roman

Using a poster board and markers provided, create a tweet that is relevant to both the action of the scene and incorporates the theme of power.

Tweets can be no more than 140 characters long, and can use hashtags and texting language (u and ur are fine here!)

OMG @Casca's omens are obvi about Rome! #thinkaboutit

Reply: But omens mean nothing bc they can be seen in tons of ways! #superstitions are not all the same

WOW Lion in the marketplace has Casca like #dangerahead

@Cassius' letter plan is #genius! Maybe now @Brutus will go along with their plan

Watch out @Caesar, @Cassius thinks your state is monstrous! #whatwillhedonext?

Pass your tweet along to the next group, they will reply to your tweet and pass it along to the next group.

Our tweets will be displayed in the classroom and we will share them with each other when we are finished or next class!

Accommodations for Diverse Learners:

Student Living in Poverty:

- Student will be given ample notice of deadlines
- Student will be offered extra help on assignments given
- Student will be offered use of school technology to type paper. If student prefers to work from home and shows the capability to do so, I will allow the student to hand write the paper, so long as their handwriting is legible.

Student with a Physical Challenge:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- Aside from general accommodations listed, I will ensure that any group work done will take into account that the student does not have to move from their seat--unless they wish to do so and it is within their physical ability.

English Language Learner:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- ELL student will be given copies of all handouts and rubric in their native language.
- Student will also be given a copy of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in their native language. Group discussion will help student to become more comfortable speaking English with their classmates.

High Achieving Student:

- High achieving student will have the ability to participate in class discussion and work with peers in order to contribute his/her ideas to the class.

At Risk Student:

- Student will receive physical copies of all handouts.
- Student will have a chance to interact with classmates during group and partner work
- Student will have the chance to reflect on their own opinions, making the material more interesting and connecting it to their own life.

Student on the Autism Spectrum:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- See general accommodations.

Works Cited

1. Milner, Joseph O'Beirne, Lucy Floyd Morcock Milner, and Joan F. Mitchell. Bridging English. 5th ed. New York: Merrill, 1993. Print.
2. Shakespeare, William, and Susan P. Cerasano. *Julius Caesar*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012. Print.
3. "Believe It or Not: Latin Superstitions." *Latina*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2014.